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New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	India	Mr. Vinay Kumar
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2011/73)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2011/73)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting.

I request the Protocol Officer to escort His Excellency Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, to the Council table.

Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

At this meeting, I will give a briefing, pursuant to rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/73, the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country.

I now give the floor to Mr. Joseph Mutaboba.

Mr. Mutaboba: It is a privilege for me to present the latest report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) (S/2011/73). I also appreciate the opportunity to exchange views with the Council on the most recent developments in Guinea-Bissau. There has been progress in the political and security environments in the country, although the situation remains complex and tenuous.

With the Council's permission, I will focus today on four main areas: the efforts deployed to enhance the stability of State institutions and to jump-start implementation of the security sector reform programme for the defence sector; the progress made in the national dialogue and conference process; the latest developments with regard to the fight against impunity, drug trafficking and organized crime; and finally, the complex relationship between the national authorities of Guinea-Bissau and international partners.

The Council will recall that in its presidential statement of 22 July 2010 (S/PRST/2010/15), the Security Council requested the international community and the Government of Guinea-Bissau to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in its efforts to strengthen and stabilize State institutions in the country. As the Council is already aware, ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) have developed a road map in support of the implementation of the security sector reform programme and to help enhance the stability of State institutions in Guinea-Bissau. The ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council adopted the road map on 24 November and submitted it to ECOWAS heads of State and Government for final endorsement. It is important to continue to impress upon the leadership of Guinea-Bissau and ECOWAS the importance of materializing their plans for jump-starting the security sector reform programme in the defence and security sectors to contribute to the stabilization process in Guinea-Bissau without delay.

At the national level, the adoption of the road map by the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council gave new impetus to efforts by technical partners to jump-start the process. On 10 December, the National Security Sector Reform Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Minister of Defence, expressed its full alignment with the road map and called on the leadership of Guinea-Bissau and ECOWAS to expedite its final endorsement.

In addition, on 6 December, the National Popular Assembly endorsed a bilateral agreement worth $30 million between the Governments of Angola and Guinea-Bissau to support security sector reform. That agreement provides for the completion of a number of tasks that fall under the ECOWAS-CPLP partnership and the road map and should complement regional efforts to help the Government of Guinea-Bissau to advance its national priorities on security sector reform. In January, a first group of Angolan military and police officers was deployed to Guinea-Bissau to work on plans to rehabilitate military infrastructure and fine-tune training plans with their national counterparts. We are told that the bulk of the Angolan team will be deployed by the end of this month.

In recent weeks, I have continued to work with the national authorities, in particular the President and the Prime Minister, to underscore the importance of a continuing firm commitment on the part of all national stakeholders, in particular the political and military leadership, to the ECOWAS-CPLP partnership and the road map. In addition to my efforts with the national authorities, in December I also wrote to Mr. James Victor Gbeho, President of the ECOWAS Commission, to reiterate the urgency of the adoption of the road map at the level of ECOWAS heads of State and Government in order not to lose momentum.

Furthermore, consistent with the provisions of resolution 1949 (2010), which requested comprehensive information detailing the proposed modalities, timing and resources relating to the implementation of the ECOWAS road map, I proposed to the President of the ECOWAS Commission that ECOWAS and CPLP experts begin working together with national counterparts without further delay, with a view to developing realistic timelines and benchmarks in accordance with conditions set by international partners, to enable us to revert to the Security Council in a timely manner. I remain confident that the United Nations will be in a better position to report to the Security Council in the next progress report of the Secretary-General, following the deployment of the joint United Nations-ECOWAS-CPLP assessment mission requested in the resolution. That exercise will also be important for finalizing the ongoing benchmarking exercise that is jointly being conducted by UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team in order to finalize the mission's strategic work plan with the appropriate benchmarks and to devise the UNIOGBIS exit strategy.

I would like to emphasize the positive momentum generated by the partnership between ECOWAS and the CPLP and the Government of Guinea-Bissau, which in recent months has had a critical impact on the political and security environment in the country. President Malam Bacai Sanhá and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior have maintained a close dialogue in recent months on major domestic issues, including on the decision to release the military officers who were detained without due process since the 1 April events. On 20 January, on the occasion of National Heroes' Day, both leaders publicly claimed their mutual respect and their resolve to strengthen the stability of national institutions. That move prompted the military leadership to confirm, through the Chief of General Staff, that the military would continue to stay out of politics, and to pledge support for the Government throughout the rest of its term and the tenure of the current legislature, until 2012.

Progress was also made in recent weeks on the national dialogue process, which is expected to result in the holding of the national conference in mid-2011. With the financial and technical support of UNIOGBIS, a series of eight national consultations were organized in December and January with personnel from the defence and security forces. Those efforts, which took place amidst important consultations on the issue of the ECOWAS-CPLP road map for support to security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau, have revealed a profound desire for change among the rank and file.

The consultations, which also involved representatives from Government institutions, civil society and the media, alongside parliamentarians, deplored the negative connotation of the armed forces in Guinea-Bissau and its responsibility in the successive crises faced by the country. The first round of consultations with the defence and security forces came up with a series of recommendations, including on the need for a separation of roles for the defence and security sectors; a career structure; mobility based on merit; and an improvement in conditions of service. The next step in the national dialogue will involve consultations in March with the diaspora in the subregion and Europe, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, as well as nine regional conferences, to be held in April and May

throughout the country, to conclude the preparatory process for the national conference.

Another area under institutional reform where progress was made in recent months was the constructive debate on a possible review of the Guinea-Bissau Constitution. In their statements at the opening of the last session of Parliament, on 19 November 2010, President Malam Bacai Sanhá and the Speaker of Parliament insisted on the need to consider that reform as a priority for the stability of State institutions. At the initiative of the parliamentary commission in charge of the review of the Constitution, and in collaboration with the Bissau Faculty of Law, UNIOGBIS organized a series of debates and seminars for members of Parliament representing all four political parties in Parliament.

The purpose of those exercises, conducted in December 2010 and January 2011, was to increase awareness among the main political actors about constitutional issues and to stimulate reflection on the constraints of State-building processes in Guinea-Bissau, as well as to increase the capacity of members of Parliament to comprehend the various aspects of the Constitution-making process and law-making principles, structures and organs.

In 2011, UNIOGBIS will continue to support the constitutional review process by opening up local and regional venues for political dialogue between members of Parliament and major national constituencies, in order to collect views on the best law-making arrangements, principles and political options that could ensure lasting stability, security, democracy and development in Guinea-Bissau.

In spite of these positive developments, much progress is yet to be made on other important aspects, in particular on the fight against impunity and the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. On the fight against impunity, despite the release, in December 2010, of the former Chief of General Staff of the armed forces and other army officers who were detained since 1 April 2010 without due process, not much progress has been made on other fronts, such as the investigations into the March and June 2009 assassinations.

I have continued to advocate for more clarity and transparency from the judicial authorities of Guinea-Bissau, so as to mobilize support among international partners to complete these investigations. However, I regret to note that both the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Office of the Prosecutor General have yet to present an accurate status of these investigations, and there are increased concerns in Guinea-Bissau that the release of all officers detained in connection with these investigations would once again amount to an attempt to freeze the process.

With regard to the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, several measures taken by the Government are worth mentioning. They include, as the Council knows, the establishment of a transnational crime unit, under the framework of the West Africa Coast Initiative, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL. I am also pleased to note the decision of the Government, in January, to close the Cufar airstrip in the south of the country, which has been used for illegal flights. In addition, on 11 January, Presidents Sanhá and Condé agreed in Guinea-Conakry to join forces in the fight against drug trafficking by enhancing collaboration between the national anti-narcotic agency of Guinea and the transnational crime unit of Guinea-Bissau.

Furthermore, on 10 February, the Guinea-Bissau Judiciary Police held a drugs-burning ceremony near Bissau, attended by the Minister of Justice — who is present here — the General Prosecutor, representatives of the diplomatic community and journalists. Fourteen kilograms of cocaine, approximately 800 kilograms of cannabis and 71 grams of crack, seized between 2007 and 2010, were burned. In their statements both the Minister of Justice and the Prosecutor General said that the ceremony showed the authorities' commitment to combat the scourge and rejected rumours that drugs seized were reintroduced into the market.

Finally, on 22 February, the Prosecutor General issued a decree specifying the competence of the Judiciary Police alone for investigations into drug-trafficking-related cases. The implementation of that decree will facilitate the work of the Judiciary Police and cooperation among relevant police institutions.

While these developments are encouraging, it is important, in my view, that the Government continue to demonstrate its resolve to fight this scourge, including by mobilizing adequate human and financial resources for the newly established transnational crime unit. Meanwhile, arrangements to allow for foreign vessels to patrol territorial waters off Guinea-Bissau and conduct joint policing activities with Guinea-Bissau

police would also be a sign of the firm commitment of the Government to achieving progress on this important issue.

I cannot conclude without addressing the important role that regional and international partners continue to play in the stabilization of the political and security environment in Guinea-Bissau. Besides the partnership with ECOWAS and the CPLP — which has yet to materialize on the ground — it is important to stress that the improved political and security environment was largely influenced by the announcement, in December 2010, that the country had reached the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative completion point. That development gave rise to cautious optimism and boosted the morale of the Government of Carlos Gomes Júnior, who is here with us, who has worked for the improvement of the macroeconomic context of Guinea-Bissau. Yet these encouragements from the international community should not be interpreted by the leadership of Guinea-Bissau as a sign that the negative trends and effects of the events of 1 April 2010 have been fully addressed.

The decision on 3 February by the European Commission and the Council of the European Union to launch consultations with the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, in accordance with article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, is yet another demonstration of the continuous concerns among international partners with regard to the remaining triggers of instability in the country.

I am encouraged, however, with the constructive response by the national authorities of Guinea-Bissau to the European Union (EU) invitation for consultations, conveying that the authorities of Guinea-Bissau shared the concerns articulated by the EU in its communication with regard to the sources of instability in the country and the need to address them. The Government also took positive steps in sending a delegation headed by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is also present, and including the spokesperson of the President, the Chief of Staff of the Chief of General Staff of the armed forces and a representative of the League of Human Rights — also in the room — to several European capitals to meet bilaterally with the relevant stakeholders and prepare the consultations that are scheduled to be held in March in Brussels.

In parallel, the Prime Minister travelled to Dakar to seek regional support for Guinea-Bissau in the upcoming consultations with the EU and to meet with ambassadors of EU member States accredited to Bissau but resident in Dakar.

In my view, these steps are a demonstration of the change of approach by the leadership of Guinea-Bissau, which seems to be ready to use this window of opportunity offered by the consultations with the EU to address in earnest those issues that prompted the disengagement and suspension of EU support for security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau. It is my hope that these consultations will produce tangible results and contribute to re-engaging the EU as a key partner in support of the reforms in Guinea-Bissau, alongside the African Union, ECOWAS, the CPLP and their member States.

The President: I thank Mr. Mutaboba for his briefing, and I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Gomes (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Allow me, first of all, in the name of the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and in my own name, to greet all those present and to thank the Council for the opportunity and the honour given me to address the members of the Security Council. As this is the first time that I participate in a Security Council meeting, I would like to underline the special appreciation I have for the role played by this body in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My country recognizes and is grateful for the efforts of the United Nations to promote stability and peace through its permanent representation in Bissau, which provides the Secretary-General with pertinent information on the evolution of the situation.

This meeting is taking place at a very specific moment in our national life, with the beginning of consultations with the European Union, in the context of article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, to discuss commitments related with human rights and the rule of law. As a prelude to these conversations, the institutions of the Republic and civil society considered it important to carry out information and sensitization measures in relation to some actors and development partners, thus creating bridges for dialogue to help our Government overcome the difficulties that characterize our current relations with some of our domestic and foreign partners.

It is in this context that I recently visited the neighbouring Republic of Senegal, where I shared some of my preoccupations and reflections with the representatives of friendly countries. And it is in this context that I must place this statement, in which I will deal with some of the recent political and economic developments and share with the Council our vision and perspectives for the future and the possible options for us to overcome together the difficult challenges that face our country.

Allow me then to talk about the efforts that the people and Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau have undertaken to promote the changes that are taking place in the country and which have contributed in an irreversible manner to the achievement of peace and stability.

The political context in Guinea-Bissau during the present legislature was negatively affected by the various manifestations of instability that occurred in 2009 and 2010, in spite of the positive signs that we saw at the beginning. The November 2008 legislative elections led to the establishment of a parliamentary majority, demonstrating a certain return to governing stability. With the formation of a new Government in January 2009, since the middle of this year Guinea-Bissau has demonstrated that it has made a true break with the past, showing its readiness to govern effectively and efficiently and guarantee progressive improvement in its people's living conditions.

However, the tragic events of 1 and 2 March 2009, which led to the deaths of two of the country's high-ranking figures — the President and the Chief of Staff of the armed forces — and later of two important politicians, had a devastating effect on the country's image and illustrated the fragility of the political situation and of the state of national development. It is important to note, however, that the Government's determined efforts mitigated the impact of those events so that they affected neither the constitutional order nor the economic and administrative reforms. The successful holding of early presidential elections renewed hopes for a new political cycle with strong institutional stability, based on a genuine majority and a Government and President backed by this demonstration of political force.

However, the military uprising of 1 April 2010, the arrest of the former Chief of Staff of the armed forces and the naming of a new military leadership put the issue of political instability on Guinea-Bissau's agenda, provoking the concern of the entire international community. The violence and political instability of these events showed that the democratic process in our country has not been completely consolidated. It is clear that to guarantee the rule of law it is not enough to have a progressive constitution that lays out the principles and rules of the democratic process, or to hold successful elections.

It is in that context that we had to deal with a number of questions: for instance, how to overcome successive political and military crises; how to restore a minimal social equilibrium; whether the military officers involved in the uprising should be part of the solution or the problem, or be marginalized in the dialogue; and the consequences that might arise from this or that position.

As the Council no doubt understands, the answers to all of these questions in a fragile State, with a precarious defence and security system, cannot be answered by the Government alone. The Government has no doubt of the urgency and necessity of reform in the areas of defence, security and justice. In truth, there is now a national consensus that reforming defence and security would be a good way to resolve the problems we have encountered in this sector, because it involves ipso facto a vision and strategy for the modernization and transformation of the security and armed forces into actors for peacemaking and consolidation of the rule of law. In the specific circumstances under which we had to take decisions, it seemed to us important to strengthen dialogue between the actors in order to reduce fear and uncertainty. That was and continues to be done, both at the level of military units and in society in general.

However, it is not enough to have political will and the capacity to identify and diminish the risks that threaten the climate of peace and stability in the country; it is necessary to act with determination. In that context, the lack of financial resources, or their conditionality, has been one of the main obstacles negatively affecting the dynamic of the process. It does not seem to us legitimate to try to achieve reform without the active participation of those who will benefit from it, and even less legitimate to make it conditional on strategies or realities that are not relevant to Guinea-Bissau. It is important to state firmly that it is Guinea-Bissau that must conduct the processes of reform, because only with Guinean

ownership of those processes can reform succeed and achieve its goals.

In spite of the difficulties I have mentioned, the Government has successfully carried out significant reform measures. In 2008, it conducted a biometric census of the armed forces, and a year later completed a census of the volunteers fighting for liberty and security. The Government finalized and adopted the priority plan for reform of the security and defence sectors and its corresponding operating plan, which will give reform greater impetus. Beyond the physical rehabilitation of barracks as a way to dignify our military and police's living conditions, these efforts include measures that will help boost retention and professionalization in our military forces and the creation of a pension fund and associated programmes. This has made possible a review of the legal framework for the new mission and mandate of the defence and security forces; the official launch, in June 2010, of a national awareness-raising campaign on the reform of the defence and security sectors; and the establishment of a special pension fund that will ensure immediate payments for military officers reaching retirement age. The fund, which is based on the voluntary contributions of development partners and of the Government itself, will be independently managed by a financial institution through a competitive public process, which has already begun, in order to ensure transparency and security.

The National Popular Assembly has been provided with a documentation centre in order to improve the technical capacity of its special committee on defence and security with a view to allow it to better track the reform process and improve political and democratic control over that process. Utilizing domestic resources and with the participation of military engineers, we have rehabilitated the Amura fortress in Bissau, as well as some barracks. We have also rehabilitated barracks in Gabú and Quebo using foreign resources. And we have established a training centre for security forces as a prelude to setting up a future police academy, whose installations have already been delivered to the Ministry of the Interior.

A national computer laboratory and training centre has been officially up and running since 2010. The centre's goal is to augment training for agents working on internal security and criminal investigation. The centre has already graduated 380 members of the Public Order Police, the Judiciary Police, the Security and Information Service and the Migration Service. Training for the security forces in Bafatá and Gabú has been conducted to help deal with child trafficking and the eradication of violence, especially gender-based violence.

We have also created and deployed a model police squad, in the context of a new policing paradigm based on citizenship and community policing. We have begun the process of registering, selecting and certifying security agents, in an effort to reshape and develop the capacity of those forces. And we have set up units for surveillance and investigation to combat drug trafficking and transnational crime. All of these activities demonstrate the Government's commitment to implementing reform and making clear our desire to respect the commitments we have made with our development partners.

Our lack of resources was partially addressed, and received an important boost from, the help provided to our Government — including significant technical, material and financial contributions — from the Government of Angola, the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. As the Council is aware, the Republic of Angola, our brother and friend, is demonstrating in practice the solidarity it has shown on the political level, ensuring that we can take reforms forward. It is important to note, however, that the financial resources provided, although significant and relevant, are not yet enough to cover all the subprogrammes I have mentioned.

Another factor threatening social stability is the weak capacity of our justice sector to deal with crime. This leads to the perception that our country has become a place of impunity. We are aware that the State has a diminished capacity to punish owing to the lack of prisons, the continuing disobedience of certain groups and corruption. An ongoing issue in that regard pertains to delays in investigating and carrying out arrests in crimes involving high State officials. This generates suspicion and uncertainty about the State's true attitude towards such crimes.

I wish to reiterate that the Government I lead will continue to make every effort, as is its obligation, to carry out its functions, within the material, technical and financial means available to the national prosecutor's office. It is important to mention here that the Government continues to wait for the support that it

requested from the international community after the tragic events in March. Those requests — made through the Secretary-General, the African Union, ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries — are intended to help investigations avail themselves of the technical support of international experts, as occurred in the Republic of Guinea, our neighbour.

It is also important to underscore the sweeping institutional changes currently under way to reform the judicial system and improve its functioning in line with full respect for democratic principles, especially the separation of powers. Like security and defence sector reform, the judicial reform outlined in the recently approved national plan for the justice system is based on human resources and training and focused on respect for the rule of law, so as to build a new justice system where impunity has no place.

Another destabilizing factor is the use of our country as a transit point for drugs. That is an abuse of our country, which we condemn and which poses a grave threat to the peace and security of our subregion. However, it is important to note that our country does not reap profits from drugs, nor does it produce drugs. On the contrary, it has combated the scourge of drugs with all the capacity that it possesses. The rehabilitation of prison facilities and technical training of the police are part of this endeavour, which will gain greater momentum with the entry into force of the ECOWAS plan and the West Africa Coast Initiative. In this context, our country has just created another unit to combat transnational crime that includes the involvement of the ministries of justice, the interior and finance.

Recent drug seizures, with the help of the military, the confiscation and public auction of airplanes used in drug trafficking, the destruction of landing strips and the physical destruction of drugs, ammunition and explosives are concrete signs of our efforts and evidence that they are producing positive results. Of course, the success of this effort to combat drug trafficking requires financial, material and technical support on a more consistent basis and on a larger scale.

In our view, the strategy outlined by our Government and presented at the International Conference on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, held in Lisbon in 2007, must be reviewed and strengthened so that it can incorporate the phenomenon of terrorism, which is today closely linked with drug trafficking. Terrorism has been increasingly felt in our subregion, owing to the fragility of our States, their lack of control over vast areas of their territory and the protection and support that terrorists receive from drug barons and drug cartels. For that reason, countries such as Guinea-Bissau, which are involved against their will in the drug trafficking cycle, deserve special attention from the international community, because the risks from the possible infiltration of terrorist networks in their territory are extremely grave, with unpredictable consequences for regional and world security.

In that context, the agreements to combat drug trafficking that we have signed with the United States of America and Venezuela must be implemented swiftly, in particular with a more active presence by the African command recently created by the American Government. As I have said before, Guinea-Bissau is not a narco-State and it does not have the resources necessary to successfully confront drug trafficking and terrorism on its own.

Lack of dialogue has also been identified as an obstacle to social stability and is being addressed with the creation of bridges of dialogue among Guineans. In August 2010, an initiative of the National Popular Assembly, with the support of the President of the Republic, began the process of dialogue and listening to society in general and to members of the Assembly in particular. A large number of initiatives have been launched, among which I wish to highlight the holding of a national peace and reconciliation conference that brought together all of the country's stakeholders.

Finally, institutional cooperation among the various branches of Government has been strengthened through a permanent dialogue and joint action between the President and the Prime Minister on the main issues facing the country. Concrete results include greater alignment on foreign policy issues, which has served to stabilize foreign relations.

Recent developments in the economic sphere are very promising. The gains that we have made can be expanded if the continued engagement and support of the international community can be assured. The country has just been granted a significant forgiveness of debt — about $1.2 billion — as a result of the progress achieved in macroeconomic stabilization, the implementation of economic reforms and the

improvement in the business environment. With regard to the management of public finances, the reforms have led to improved fiscal performance and helped to reduce the primary deficit. The increase in internal revenue and budget support will allow the Government to stabilize some payments, especially salaries of public employees and payments on the internal debt, thereby contributing to a recovery in economic confidence, liquidity of the banking system and the easing of social tensions.

With regard to improving the business climate, reforms aimed at reducing bureaucracy, simplifying and facilitating the creation of companies and licensing entrepreneurial activity have been instituted. With the objective of attracting foreign direct investment, a vast restructuring programme has been started in certain sectors, including energy, telecommunications and ports.

In the social sector, there is slow improvement in health and education indicators and the country still faces great challenges in addressing the Millennium Development Goals. Life expectancy is still low, as are health and education indicators. And poverty still afflicts a large part of the population. In spite of the progress that we have made and the internal dynamics that have given a great many opportunities for Guineans, the country is still caught in the trap of poverty. Tragically, poverty continues to affect over 60 per cent of the Guinean population. Poverty is at the root of great social ills, instability, tension and crime. The chronic privations that affect certain segments of our society are the cause of behaviours that undermine peace and stability. Guinea-Bissau, because of its small territory, its small and young population and its strong economic potential, has more than enough potential resources to eliminate poverty.

Given the development challenges faced by our country, with our strengths and weaknesses, the Government has reviewed its global poverty reduction strategy. Under our second national poverty reduction strategy, in the next five years we will continue to focus on modernization and policies that seek to improve access to social services, as well as strengthen sectors with the greatest growth potential, such as agriculture, agro-industry, fisheries, tourism and mining. The strategy seeks to generate rapid and durable growth through the diversification of sectors and the opening up of the economy to regional and international trade and foreign investment. This requires significant expansion of the private sector and improved transparency in the investment climate. Success depends on effective support of the international community — particularly in social sectors, rehabilitation and building basic infrastructure that was in large part destroyed during the political-military conflict.

The country's economic success depends on political stability and peace. Therefore, reforms in the defence, security, justice and public administration sectors will continue to be our priorities. It is clear to me that the forward and backward steps of the process of consolidating democratic governance may cause reservations in some partners' decisions to continue to provide support to Guinea-Bissau. However, I want to draw attention to the fact that some people fear change due to a lack of knowledge or information. Such fear was evident among the military class, who considered that reform would lead to negative consequences for their social standing and their quality of life. The intensive sensitization campaigns and strategic debates of the reconciliation process have led to positive results in this regard.

Instability and cyclical crises must not be considered as destiny. Guinea-Bissau is not a failed State. We recognize the fragility of our institutions, but we are determined to proceed with broad, strategic and structural reforms, intensify the fight against drug trafficking and promote durable, sustainable economic growth. We have a very ambitious agenda for our country. Its concretization depends on a number of factors, including internal and external efforts.

The Government continues to stress the need for greater involvement of the international community. My country has received encouraging signs from some States that, while concerned about the problems that we face, believe that if Guinea-Bissau continues the course that generates peace and progress, it has immense opportunities to take the path to development.

The European Union is a global actor, central to the development of peoples. We believe it should continue to carry out its actions in the country, which are very positive and contribute to changing the lives of the people for the better and make it possible to promote the changes that we all desire.

We count on the support of all members of the Security Council in the consultations that we will soon begin with the European Union. The quality of the

report just presented to the Council (S/2011/73) is unequivocal proof that Council members follow closely the events in our country and that Guinea-Bissau's efforts and commitment deserves the Council's trust.

Taking advantage of our participation in this important meeting, we cannot but manifest our concern over the events that occurred following the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the recent demonstrations in Tunisia and in Egypt — repercussions of which remain to be seen in other countries in North Africa and in the Middle East. As a country in difficulty, one that has known the consequences of war and violence, we exhort the United Nations and all peace-loving countries to mobilize in order to find rapid solutions, avoiding further catastrophes the impacts of which could be devastating for the future of our democracies and of the world in general.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate our appreciation to all members of the Security Council here present and to express my satisfaction at this meeting, which in my opinion has been valuable in bringing us closer at such a crucial moment in the political and economic life of my country.

The President: I thank His Excellency Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior for his presentation.

I will now give a briefing in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, and thank him for his presentation. I also warmly welcome the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, National Defence, Justice and for Economy, Planning and Regional Integration, and other members of the delegation of Guinea-Bissau. The presence of such a high-level delegation in this meeting, and in the meeting of the configuration that we held yesterday, is a clear signal of the country's commitment to increasing its cooperation with the international community.

I commend the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau for the comprehensive presentation he has just made, which enables us to better appreciate the many challenges and the opportunities facing Guinea-Bissau. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, for his briefing and his commendable work in Bissau.

In the past few months the configuration has focused its work on specific areas, notably security sector reform, the rule of law, combating drug trafficking and impunity, addressing concerns of youth and women and supporting institution-building. We have not lost sight of the importance of encouraging job creation and promoting a more vigorous economy as crucial elements of a peacebuilding strategy.

In a meeting of the configuration on 22 November 2010, members were briefed by representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Those representatives highlighted the notable progress made by Guinea-Bissau in recent years in the areas of macroeconomic management and public finance, resulting in economic growth, low inflation and an increase in revenue collection. It was their assessment that Guinea-Bissau was on track to reach the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative (HIPC). Building on the discussions with the IMF and the World Bank, the members of the configuration were encouraged to support the deliberations of the Boards of the IMF and the World Bank concerning Guinea-Bissau.

Last December, the Boards of the IMF and the World Bank declared that Guinea-Bissau had reached the completion point of the HIPC Initiative and decided to support debt relief for the country in the amount of $1.2 billion. I am confident that the measures adopted by the international financial institutions will help lead Guinea-Bissau into a virtuous cycle, since they will, among other positive effects, normalize Guinea-Bissau's relations with external creditors — especially members of the Paris Club, the International Development Association and the African Development Fund — possibly leading to further debt relief; send a positive signal to international donors and investors; reduce the country's dependence on budgetary aid; expand its fiscal space for social programmes; and demonstrate and recognize the progress that the Government of Guinea-Bissau has made in macroeconomic management, which will surely strengthen the civilian authorities and institutions of the country. A window of opportunity has reopened for Guinea-Bissau.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his latest report (S/2011/73), key economic and public administration reforms are moving forward as the Government of Guinea-Bissau seeks to improve fiscal discipline. Economic growth was expected to reach 4 per cent in 2010, compared to 3 per cent in 2009. The Government has also succeeded in increasing tax revenues in the context of fiscal reforms and anticipates that in 2011 it will have the budgetary resources to cover spending beyond the payment of salaries.

It is also worth noting that the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Joint Steering Committee approved the 2011-2013 Peacebuilding Priority Plan for Guinea Bissau, which identifies priorities for the next two to three years, notably to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, to revitalize the economy and to reactivate basic social services. In this regard, we welcome the recommendation of the Secretary-General to allocate up to $16.8 million of the PBF to the implementation of the Priority Plan.

I am encouraged by the progress that Guinea-Bissau has made to reverse the negative effects of the events of 1 April 2010. The release of Vice-Admiral Zamora Induta and other senior officers is emblematic of those efforts. I also note in that respect the positive steps taken by the country's leadership, especially by President Malam Bacai Sanhá and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior, to demonstrate their renewed commitment to pursue enhanced dialogue and political negotiations.

The people and the Government of Guinea-Bissau are doing their part to overcome the setbacks of the recent past. The members of the configuration encourage the leadership of the country to take further concrete steps in fighting impunity and enhancing the rule of law and civilian control of the military.

Security sector reform is of fundamental importance. The members of the Peacebuilding Commission configuration for Guinea-Bissau welcomed the road map supported by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries for the implementation of security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau and expected its timely endorsement by ECOWAS. They encouraged the Government of Guinea-Bissau to fully commit to its implementation.

The fight against drug trafficking is an issue of grave concern to the members of the Commission. Fighting illicit drugs effectively requires functioning State institutions, especially in the areas of justice and security, as well as firm political will. We emphasize the importance of a regional approach and the role played by ECOWAS in this regard.

Both as individual Governments and collectively, we must all do more and do better to support the implementation of the ECOWAS regional action plan and the West Africa Coast Initiative. In this respect, we welcome the letter of Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior to the Secretary-General of 27 October 2010 expressing the complete engagement of the Government of Guinea-Bissau in energetically pursuing the fight against the plague of drug trafficking and the organized crime associated to it. The signing of a memorandum of understanding by the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Finance establishing a transnational crime unit in Guinea-Bissau is a further positive step in the right direction. We now look forward to the designation of the members of the unit and to discussing ways in which the Peacebuilding Commission can support such efforts.

International efforts to help consolidate peace in Guinea-Bissau should not rest solely upon security-related cooperation. In order for peace to take hold, the foundations for socio-economic development must be strengthened. We need to support capacity-building and assist the country in revitalizing its economy. At the end of the day, it is a dynamic economy and the creation of job opportunities that will generate the revenues needed for the provision of basic services to the population and allow the State to function in a sustainable manner.

We must take advantage of this positive momentum. More than ever, engagement and cooperation with Guinea-Bissau is necessary to assist the country in building democratic governance and effectively addressing key challenges. The international community should step up its support to Guinea-Bissau to help enhance national political stability, promote reconciliation, combat impunity and organized crime and foster socio-economic development.

We must persevere in our collective efforts to support Guinea-Bissau. This requires that national authorities continue the ongoing efforts to fully restore

international confidence. It also means that international partners should look beyond the setbacks of the recent past and support long-term political and economic stability in the country.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussions on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.